

In the Specification:

Please amend the specification as follows:

At page 5, please replace the paragraph starting at the seventh line from the bottom of the page with the following paragraph:

Newly constructed plasmids (pNKER1, PNKER2 and pNKER43) described above were further transformed into *B. subtilis licheniformis* DB104. Transformation of *B. subtilis licheniformis* DB104 was carried out by the competence cell method as previously described (Lin et. al, 1997). The fidelity of the *kerA* insert in vectors was verified by restriction enzyme digestion analysis.

At page 9, please replace the paragraph starting at the sixth line from the bottom of the page and ending at the third line from the top of page 10 with the following paragraph:

In the present invention, stable *B. licheniformis* strains carrying multiple integrated *kerA* in chromosome were constructed to overproduce keratinase. Different gene copy number ranging from one to eight (data not shown) in the chromosome was successfully isolated by incorporating certain degrees of neomycin in the selective medium. Compared to the *B. subtilis* expression system, stable integrants producing higher enzyme activity were developed. Unlike the plasmid-containing expression system in *B. subtilis* previously developed, the new chromosomal integration of *kerA* in *B. licheniformis* avoided the segregational and structural instability common to replicative plasmids (Bron and Luxen, 1985; Harington et al., 1988; Primrose and Ehrlich, 1981).